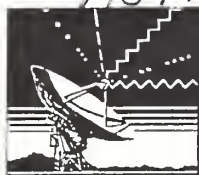


## **Historic, Archive Document**

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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2756

March 15, 1996

**KARNAL BUNT DETECTED IN ARIZONA** -- USDA, in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Agriculture, announced (March 8) that karnal bunt, a fungal disease of grain, was detected in durum wheat seed. Suspect seed samples were detected at a seed dealership during routine testing by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. After forwarding samples to the state's agricultural lab, USDA's Agricultural Research Service was given samples for final confirmation. The disease was confirmed as karnal bunt. A scientific panel comprised of state, federal and industry technical experts and scientists is being convened to determine further actions. This is a localized find and emergency quarantines have been instituted on those infected properties, seed, farm equipment, planted wheat and soil associated with the infected wheat. State and Federal quarantines will be put into place to augment this emergency action and the Department has established a wheat export certification team to develop options for dealing with potential trade issues. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 734-3256.**

**WHEAT SUPPLY FORECAST DOWN** -- USDA's latest wheat outlook report (March 13) forecasts 1995/96 supplies at 2,762 million bushels -- the lowest in six years and the second lowest in 20 years. Area planted, area harvested and yield have declined for three years in a row. Unusual planting conditions for the past three years have contributed to reduced area planted, especially in Montana and Missouri. Excess moisture and cool conditions prevented some spring wheat from being planted, especially in South Dakota. Yields in 1995 were hurt by late frost and rain at harvest in important wheat areas. Other factors were delayed planting, disease and insect problems and summer heat. Wheat production in 1995 was 2,186 million bushels, down 6 percent from a year earlier. **Contact: Ed Allen (202) 501-8512.**

**FEED GRAIN SITUATION** -- The feed grain situation will continue extremely tight for the remaining months of 1995/96, according to the latest report from USDA (March 13). Changes in this month's forecast were fairly small, but reinforced this tight outlook. Corn exports were increased 50 million bushels, while imports went up 5 million. This reduced projected ending stocks 45 million bushels. Oats imports and ending stocks each dropped 5 million bushels. Barley export forecast was raised 10 million bushels and imports lowered by 5 million, resulting in small cuts in domestic use and stocks. **Contact: Pete Riley (202) 501-8512.**

**USDA SIGNS MEMO WITH WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES** -- Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment James R. Lyons signed a Memorandum of Understanding (March 14) with the Salt Lake City Olympic Organization Committee (SLOOC). The signing took place during a meeting of the SLOOC's board of trustees. This memorandum joins USDA and SLOOC in partnership and assures collaboration on environmental issues associated with the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. The signing ceremony took place at the Salt Lake Olympic Organizing Committee board room in Salt Lake City, Utah. Tom Welch, president of the Salt Lake City Olympic Organization Committee, joined Lyons at the signing ceremony. **Contact: Jim Petterson (202) 720-4623.**

**PUBLIC INPUT ASKED ON AGRICULTURAL CONCENTRATION** -- The Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration, which was announced last month (February 14) by Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, is requesting public input during its second meeting March 25 in St. Louis. The committee meeting is being held specifically to hear views from the public. Due to time constraints, oral statements will be limited to five minutes at the meeting. However, written statements of any length may be submitted to the committee at the meeting, by mail or fax. Following the public input session March 25, the committee will meet in open session on March 26 and until noon March 27. Purpose of the committee is to advise the Secretary regarding the extent of concentration, or lack of competition, in the agricultural industry, the causes and effects of concentration and whether there is need for legislation or modification of U.S. Department of Agriculture programs to address the issue. **Contact: Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959.**

**GENE GIVING PLANTS LIVELIER DEFENSE IS PATENTED** -- A modified gene that helps protect tomato and other crops from insect pests was patented (March 5) as a new biotechnology tactic. It was developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists. When chewed by insects, plants engineered with this gene churn out large amounts of a multipurpose plant hormone called cytokinin. USDA molecular geneticist Ann Smigocki said, "Overproducing the hormone at levels up to 70 times normal jump starts the plant's own biochemical defenses." In Smigocki's tests, hornworms that fed on the bioengineered plants did not die, but ate much less than normal. The smaller percentage of aphids that survived wound up smaller and often failed to mature. Smigocki is trying to purify natural insect-killing compounds that the plants make as part of their response to cytokinin. The engineered gene may simulate plants' natural defenses more closely than the most common biotechnology approach. **Contact: Jim De Quattro (301) 344-2736.**

**A CURE FOR PLUM POX VIRUS** -- Ralph Scorza, horticulturalist for U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, with help from French collaborator Michel Ravelonandro, has been working for the past five years on protecting U.S. fruit growers from plum pox virus. The deadly virus is now spreading in orchards throughout Europe. Recently, the virus was discovered in South America. Plum pox, sometimes known as Sharka virus, causes fruit to drop from affected trees 20 to 40 days before maturity and leaves the remaining fruit unmarketable. The disease is transmitted by aphids and by grafting. Scorza said, "This virus causes severe damage and crop loss in plums, peaches and apricots. There is no remedy, once it attacks a tree." Scorza and his colleagues recently developed transgenic plum plants that resist the virus. The new gene was put into plum trees and sent to France to be tested with the virus. After two years of tests, one breeding of the line appears to have complete immunity to plum pox virus. **Contact: Ralph Scorza (304) 725-3451.**

**ALGAE SHOW PROMISE AGAINST CANCER** -- A blue-green alga rich in beta carotene and other disease-fighting carotenoids may help prevent cancer of the mouth. In developing countries, Spirulina algae are cheaper than supplements of beta carotene or vitamin A. Researchers have shown these vitamins to reverse leukoplakia -- thick, white, precancerous patches in the mouth. A new study, coordinated by a USDA Agricultural Research Service scientist, was the first evaluation of Spirulina's cancer-preventive potential in humans. After consuming a gram of algae daily for a year, 45 percent of the study's volunteers had complete regression of leukoplakia. Another 12 percent significantly improved. The study was conducted in southwestern India, which has a high incidence of leukoplakia. Cancer of the mouth and of the cervix, having the same kind of mucus membrane, is on the rise worldwide. **Contact: Padmanabhan P. Nair (301) 504-8145.**

**EDITED BY LESLIE PARKER**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #2024** -- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is becoming a popular management tool for America's farmers. Brenda Curtis reports on IPM from both the scientists' and farmers' viewpoints. **(Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary).**

**CONSUMER TIME #1502** -- The silent epidemic. The house eaters. Weeds into flowers. The incredible edible egg. Lamb a red meat alternative. **(Weekly cassette -- consumer features).**

**AGRITAPE #2016** -- Rapid response to "Karnal Bunt" discovery. An analysis of the Farm Bills. The future of CRP. USDA testing new forms of crop insurance. The economic benefits of IPM. **(Weekly cassette -- news features).**

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Thursday, March 21, dairy outlook. Friday, March 22, U.S. agricultural trade update. Monday, March 25, livestock, dairy and poultry outlook. Tuesday, March 26, weekly weather and crop outlook. Wednesday, March 27, fruit and tree nut report. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carry many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES:** Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman talks with a multi-generational farm family in Ohio about the past and future of American agriculture in this video special intended for use during National Agriculture Week.

**ACTUALITIES:** Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman comments on how USDA is dealing with the fungal disease called karnal bunt that has been found in durum wheat seed in Arizona and what impact it will have on trade.

**UPCOMING FEATURES:** Lynn Wyvill reports on a research and education program in Washington state to control emissions of very fine particles of dust called PM10.

**SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:** Thursdays from 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 402R (located at 89 degrees West), Transponder 13, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3960 MHz.

*Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. Internet E-mail: LQuinn@USDA.GOV.*

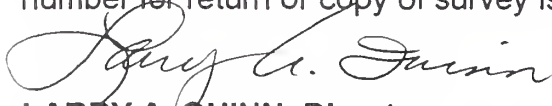
## OFF MIKE

**GREEN WEEK**...in Germany features a large international food exhibit that is displayed in more than 20 buildings. **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar MN) was one of two U.S. journalists officially invited to attend last month's celebration. Journalists from 40 countries were there. Lynn joined with fellow farm broadcaster, **Jack Crowner** (Kentucky Ag Network, Louisville, KY) who also attended, to take their own tour of farms and factories in the former East Germany and northwest Germany. I expect their listeners are now hearing about their adventures. Also, Lynn earned two awards recently. He became the first broadcaster to win the Friends of Agriculture Award from Minnesota Corn Growers, and he received the top Service to Agriculture Award from the University of Minnesota Waseca Alumni Association. A statewide poll of graduates chose Lynn for the recognition.

**MICHIGAN EVENTS**...getting coverage last week by **Rod Zamarron** (Michigan Farm Radio Network, Lansing, MI) included Michigan State University's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, the Michigan FFA Convention and the Great Lakes Peach Conference. Rod says that Michigan State Cooperative Extension Service is joining with Purdue University on March 21 to produce a satellite broadcast to county extension offices on the Farm Bill. Rod joined the 25-year-old Michigan Farm Radio Network in 1993.

**39 YEARS**...in radio, 11 as a farm director is the benchmark that **Neil Trobak** (KCIM/KKRL, Carroll, IA) passes this year. Neil says farmers are waiting for spring, but have enjoyed good hog and grain prices. Beef producers are not doing as well with losses of several dollars per head in fed cattle marketings. Neil was planning some special promotions related to National Agriculture Week and Agriculture Day, March 20.

**TV SURVEY IS DUE**...by March 22 from those of you who use our weekly satellite services. Fax number for return or copy of survey is (202) 720-5773.



**LARRY A. QUINN, Director**

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